DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 768 SP 041 492

TITLE	Q & A: Questions and Answers for Teachers About National Board Certification, 2003.
INSTITUTION	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Arlington, VA.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.; National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA.
PUB DATE	2003-02-00
NOTE	21p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Office, 1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22209. Tel: 800-22TEACH (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.nbpts.org.
PUB TYPE	Reference Materials - General (130)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; *Alternative Teacher Certification; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; *National Standards; Teacher Competencies; Teacher Improvement; Teacher Role; Teaching Skills
IDENTIFIERS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

ABSTRACT

This brochure offers answers to questions for teachers about National Board Certification, including: what the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is; what National Board Certification (NBC) is; how involved teachers are in NBPTS; NBPTS' five core propositions; the NBPTS standards; how NBPTS standards are developed; whether NBC really recognizes accomplished teaching; what scholarships and loans are available for candidates; how teachers can become candidates; how candidates can achieve NBC; what certificates are available in 2003; what age categories are used; where the assessment centers are located; how teachers know if they are eligible; how candidates know which certificate to seek; what a generalist certificate is; when a teacher is ready for the process; when candidates learn whether or not they achieved NBC; whether candidates may retake portfolio entries or assessment center exercises if they do not achieve NBC; whether there are other roles for teachers who are not ready to seek NBC; what other activities or roles are aligned with the NBPTS mission; what the National Board Registration and Information Center is; whether there is a Spanish language option; what to do if candidates need special accommodations for a disability; and which organizations support the NBPTS. (SM)

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PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

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Q&A

Questions and Answers For Teachers about National Board Certification©

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Scholarship Information
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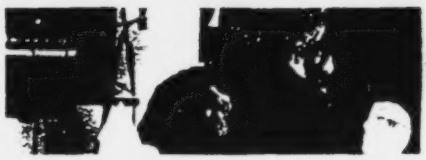
The National Board's mission is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by:

- maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do,
- providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards, and
- advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.



Q: **What** is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards?

A: The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is an organization of teachers and others committed to teachers who are working to strengthen the teaching profession and to improve student learning.

NBPTS, created in 1987, is a nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit organization.

Q: **What** is National Board Certification®?

A: National Board Certification, offered by NBPTS, is a demonstration of a candidate's teaching practice as measured against high and rigorous standards. It is a symbol of commitment to excellence in teaching. When a teacher achieves National Board Certification, it's a credential attesting to the fact a teacher has been assessed by his or her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgments about student learning, and acts effectively on those judgments.

The advanced system of National Board Certification is voluntary and complements, but does not replace, state licensing. It is a professional certification increasingly used by states as an option for advanced licensing status.

Equally important, National Board Certification is a means to professional growth and improvement. Candidates describe the process as a way to deepen subject matter knowledge and become more skillful in daily classroom instruction and student assessment. They say the ultimate result is improved student learning.

Candidates achieve National Board Certification if they meet or exceed NBPTS Standards by demonstrating their knowledge through portfolio entries and assessment center exercises (more details about the assessment process are available on page 7). A candidate who achieves National Board Certification then may refer to him or herself as a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT)®.

Q: **How** involved are teachers in NBPTS?

A: The NBPTS Board of Directors is made up of 63 members and most of them are classroom teachers.

Teachers also serve on standards committees and assessment development teams, pilot test portfolio exercises, and score the portfolios and performances submitted by candidates for National Board Certification.

Q: **What** are The Five Core Propositions?

A: NBPTS seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected in five core propositions.

The Five Core Propositions

I. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

II. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

III. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

IV. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

V. Teachers are members of learning communities.

NBPTS Standards for every field and developmental level are centered on these propositions that express the effectiveness, knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments of the accomplished teacher.

Q: **What** are the NBPTS Standards?

A: At the core of the National Board Certification process are standards that describe the highest level of teaching in different disciplines and with students at different developmental levels. These standards represent a consensus among accomplished teachers and other education experts about what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. NBPTS Standards are also powerful professional development tools for teachers at all levels of performance.

Q: **How** are NBPTS Standards developed?

A: NBPTS Standards are developed by a specific standards committee, in collaboration with the NBPTS Board of Directors and the public.

Following an extensive national search, the NBPTS Board of Directors appoints a standards committee of outstanding educators, the majority of whom are practicing classroom teachers in the field. Other committee members include teacher educators, developmental experts, and leaders in the discipline. The committee reflects the diversity of perspectives, specialties, and teaching contexts that exist in the field, as well as racial, ethnic, regional, and gender diversity.

Through much work and discussion, the standards committee develops standards for its field. The standards document identifies the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions of accomplished teaching in the field; shows how a teacher's professional judgment is reflected in observable action; and describes how the standards come to life in different settings. The committee also draws on other standards and research in the field during the development process.

After the standards are approved for public comment release by a working group of the NBPTS Board of Directors, the standards are extensively disseminated nationwide during a public comment period. The standards committee then revises the standards in light of the public comment feedback. Each document undergoes a rigorous review by the entire NBPTS Board of Directors prior to final adoption.

Approximately five years after publication, each standards document is reviewed using the same standards development process, to assure the standards remain up-to-date with current research, content, pedagogy, technology, and classroom realities in the field.

Currently, NBPTS Standards are available for all 24 certificate fields.

NBPTS Standards available for download free-of-charge at *www.nbpts.org*

To purchase NBPTS Standards, call *1-800-22TEACH.*

Q: Does National Board Certification really recognize accomplished teaching?

A: Yes, according to research conducted by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. NBCTs significantly outperformed their peers on 11 out of 13 key dimensions of generally recognized measures of good teaching.

For example, NBCTs were better at understanding why students succeed and fail on a given academic task, engaging students without overwhelming them, anticipating difficulties students might have with new concepts, and improvising when faced with the unexpected.

In addition to evaluating the teachers against the 13 dimensions, researchers examined samples of student work in classes taught by NBCTs and teachers who had sought National Board Certification but hadn't achieved it.

Almost three-fourths of the work samples collected from students taught by NBCTs in the study reflected a high level of comprehension of the concepts being taught, compared to three in 10 of the work samples of students taught by teachers who hadn't achieved National Board Certification.

Based on student work samples, the study's authors declared that National Board Certification "is identifying and certifying teachers who are producing students who differ in profound and important ways from those taught by non-certified teachers."

"The process of achieving National Board Certification required me to re-examine my current teaching practices to ensure maximum student learning in all areas of the curriculum. National Board Certification has enabled me to perform to the best of my ability."

– Sue Bentz

NBCT, Middle Childhood/Generalist,
Pennsylvania

Q: **What** scholarships and loans are available for candidates?

A: The National Board Scholarship Program provides scholarships for candidates for National Board Certification. Through the generosity of its founding sponsor, the Washington Mutual Foundation, and other donors, scholarships are now available to a growing number of candidates.

There are a limited number of available scholarships. It's recommended candidates apply as soon as possible if they would like to be considered.

Information about the National Board Scholarship Program is available at *www.nbpts.org/scholarshipinfo/*

National Board Scholarship Manager
1-888-908-FEES (3337)

Many states and local school districts provide loans and scholarships for candidates. The latest count shows 48 states and more than 400 school districts provide some form of incentive and/or recognition.

***State and Local Action* Home Page at**
www.nbpts.org

1-800-22TEACH

The National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) also offer loans to teachers pursuing National Board Certification.

For more information about NEA's loan program, call *1-800-603-3953.*

For more information about AFT's loan program, call *1-800-AFT-JOIN.*

Partial financial support is available in each state through the federal Candidate Subsidy Program. This program, made possible through annual appropriations from the United States Congress, provides funds to a limited number of candidates in each state to help offset the assessment fee.

For more information about the federal Candidate Subsidy Program visit the *State and Local Action* home page at *www.nbpts.org*

Call *1-800-22TEACH* **for more details about the federal Candidate Subsidy Program.**

Q: How does a teacher become a candidate?

A: A teacher who wants to become a candidate needs to complete an application.

Teachers may apply online by accessing the *Candidate Application Form* located at the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org*.

The *Guide to National Board Certification* is available online. For a printed version, which also includes an application, call *1-800-22TEACH*.

Part of the application requirement is payment of at least $300 of the $2,300 assessment fee. Once NBPTS processes a candidate's application and fee, the teacher's candidacy becomes active. The date when the initial $300 portion of the fee is paid (by the candidate or another party) determines the candidate's portfolio deadline.

The chart below outlines the portfolio deadline dates for candidates in 2003, as determined by the receipt of the initial $300 toward the $2,300 assessment fee.

Date when the $300 portion of fee is paid:	**Portfolio deadline date:**
Jan. 1–March 31, 2003	Jan. 16, 2004
April 1–June 30, 2003	Feb. 16, 2004
July 1–Sept. 30, 2003	March 16, 2004
Oct. 1–Dec. 31, 2003	April 16, 2004

Portfolio instructions are available for downloading at no cost at *www.nbpts.org*. Teachers are encouraged to review this material in advance of applying in order to make good choices about National Board Certification.

Portfolio instructions are provided to registered candidates via CD-ROM free-of-charge. Print copies are available by calling *1-800-22TEACH*.

The assessment center testing window is determined by the date when a candidate (or those providing financial assistance) pays the assessment fee in full and all eligibility requirements are met. The chart below outlines all of the assessment center window dates.

If $2,300 fee is paid in full and all eligibility requirements are met between:	**Assessment center window:**
Jan. 1–March 31, 2003	April 1–Sept. 30, 2003
April 1–June 30, 2003	July 1–Dec. 31, 2003
July 1–Sept. 30, 2003	Oct. 1, 2003–March 31, 2004
Oct. 1, 2003–Jan. 31, 2004	Jan. 1–June 30, 2004

Candidates seeking state funding must comply with state requirements

Q: **How** does a candidate achieve National Board Certification?

A: Candidates achieve National Board Certification after they successfully complete the assessment process. A candidate's efforts to achieve National Board Certification will likely take the better part of a school year and involve a total of 200–400 hours of work.

The assessment process consists of the following:

Portfolio Entries: Candidates submit four portfolio entries. Three of the entries are classroom-based and include videotapes that document the candidate's teaching practice and examples of student work. The videos and student work examples are supported by commentaries about the goals and purposes of instruction, analysis about what occurred and the effectiveness of the practice, and the rationale for the candidate's professional judgment. The fourth entry requires candidates to demonstrate their work with students' families and their community and collaboration with the professional community.

The work on portfolio entries usually takes at least four months to complete because it's designed to cover an extended period of a candidate's time in the classroom.

Once the portfolio entries and the assessment center exercises are submitted to the National Board, they're scored by teachers who have participated in intensive training and have qualified for scoring by demonstrating an understanding of NBPTS Standards, the directions to candidates and scoring guides.

Assessment Center Exercises: Candidates are presented with six computer-delivered assessment center prompts (each allowing up to 30 minutes for response) that are designed to elicit knowledge of subject matter content.

For more information, visit the *Standards & National Board Certification* section of *www.nbpts.org*

Q: **What** certificates are available in 2003?

Art
- Early and Middle Childhood/Art
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Art

Career and Technical Education
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/ Career and Technical Education

English as a New Language
- Early and Middle Childhood/English as a New Language
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/English as a New Language

English Language Arts
- Early Adolescence/English Language Arts
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts

Exceptional Needs
- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialist

Generalist
- Early Childhood/Generalist
- Middle Childhood/Generalist
- Early Adolescence/Generalist

Library Media
- Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media

Mathematics
- Early Adolescence/Mathematics
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics

Music
- Early and Middle Childhood/Music
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Music

Science
- Early Adolescence/Science
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science

Social Studies–History
- Early Adolescence/Social Studies–History
- Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Social Studies–History

Physical Education
- Early and Middle Childhood/Physical Education
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Physical Education

World Languages Other than English
- Early and Middle Childhood/World Languages Other than English
- Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English

Languages available: French, German, Japanese, Latin and Spanish

Q: **What** are the age categories?

Early Childhood	= Ages 3–8
Middle Childhood	= Ages 7–12
Early and Middle Childhood	= Ages 3–12
Early Childhood through Young Adulthood	= Ages 3–18+*
Early Adolescence	= Ages 11–15
Adolescence and Young Adulthood	= Ages 14–18+
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood	= Ages 11–18+

*For the Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialist certificate, the ages covered are birth–21+.

A National Board certificate is valid for 10 years from the date of certification.

For complete information about these certificates, visit the *Certificate Knowledge Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

Q: **Where** are the assessment centers?

A: There are more than 300 assessment centers across the United States.

A candidate's assessment center testing window is based on when the candidate's fee is paid in full and all eligibility requirements are met (see page 6).

Candidates may access the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org* to learn where the assessment centers are located and how to make an appointment.

Q: **How** do teachers know if they are eligible?

A: Teachers are eligible to seek National Board Certification if, at the time they apply, they:

- hold a baccalaureate degree;
- have completed three years of teaching experience prior to submitting an application; and
- have held a valid state teaching license for those three years, or where a license is not required, have taught in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state.

Eligibility information is available at the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

1-800-22TEACH

Q: **How** do candidates know which certificate to seek?

A: The first step in deciding which certificate is appropriate for a teacher is to determine the age range of the students and subjects they teach. This is especially important, as candidates must be able to demonstrate content and pedagogical knowledge across the full age range of the certificate area they pursue.

For more information about these certificates, visit the *Certificate Knowledge Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

Q: **What** is a generalist certificate?

A: Generalist certificates are for teachers who develop student skills and knowledge across all areas of the curriculum. They do this by drawing on a broad and deep knowledge of pedagogy. Generalists may teach all subjects on an interdisciplinary team, or a single subject infused with ideas from other subjects.

Q: **When** is a teacher ready for the process?

A: The best way to determine a teacher's readiness for National Board Certification is for that person to review the standards document for their certificate area. NBPTS Standards in each field form the basis for National Board Certification.

Candidate experience has shown that attempting to achieve National Board Certification will likely take a total time commitment of 200–400 hours during the school year.

Prospective candidates may also want to speak with National Board Certified Teachers.

The directory of NBCTs can be accessed at *www.nbpts.org*

Q: **When** do candidates learn if they achieved National Board Certification?

A: Scoring is a complex and thorough process that ensures fairness and equity for all candidates. Careful analyses are always performed before the release of any results. Candidates can expect to receive their results on or before Dec. 31, 2004. Private, secure online access to results is available for candidates.

Score reports are provided directly to candidates by the National Board. NBPTS policy strictly prohibits the National Board from releasing candidates' scores to any third-party payer or anyone else. The National Board's policy is to maintain the confidentiality of all candidates. The National Board does, however, make public the list of National Board Certified Teachers.

Q: **May** candidates retake portfolio entries or assessment center exercises if they don't achieve National Board Certification?

A: NBPTS always wants to encourage teachers to achieve National Board Certification and realizes not every teacher will achieve it on the first try. That's why NBPTS automatically banks candidates' scores and offers retake opportunities for candidates wishing to pursue certification.

Score banking and retake information at
www.nbpts.org

1-800-22TEACH

Q: **Are** there other roles for teachers who are not ready to seek National Board Certification?

A: Yes. NBPTS is always looking for teachers to help score candidate entries for National Board Certification. Teachers don't need to be NBCTs to serve as assessors. Serving as an assessor is a rewarding professional development activity.

Qualifications to serve as an assessor are:

- a baccalaureate degree;
- a valid teaching license/certificate, if required by the teacher's state;
- a minimum of three years of teaching experience in a pre-K–12 setting;
- teach at least half-time in the certificate area for which he or she is applying to assess or be an NBCT in the certificate area;
- successful completion of assessor training (provided by NBPTS); and
- not a current or non-achieving candidate for National Board Certification.

Teachers may apply online to be an assessor at the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

Q: **What** other activities or roles are aligned with the National Board mission?

A: There are other ways to participate in the mission of the National Board, such as:

- reading and studying NBPTS Standards with colleagues as part of continuing professional development;
- reviewing draft standards during the public comment period;
- serving as a pilot-test teacher for new exercises and new certificates;
- promoting greater awareness in your community by hosting a National Board Certification meeting;
- nominating yourself or other educators to serve on standards committees; and
- participating in other leadership activities listed on the NBPTS Web site.

Q: **What** is NBRIC?

A: NBRIC is the National Board Registration and Information Center – the new online personal home page for all candidates.

All candidates may now access, update and print their candidate application data via a password-protected Web site. Plus, this personalized Web site shows candidates when their fees were posted to their account, when NBPTS received their eligibility forms, and when NBPTS received their portfolios.

Each candidate now has the ability to manage his or her own candidate profile with NBPTS, using this secure Web site that can be accessed only by using passwords that candidates create themselves. All candidates should use this Web site to update their information whenever changes occur.

NBRIC is located at the *Candidate Resource Center* section of the NBPTS Home page. Candidates are strongly encouraged to access this site, establish their passwords, check their data and complete and/or update any missing information.

NBRIC is located at *www.nbpts.org*

Candidates with questions regarding NBRIC should contact *1-800-22TEACH.*

Q: **Is** there a Spanish Language Option?

A: Yes. The Spanish Language Option allows candidates to submit student work and videotapes in Spanish. Detailed information about the Spanish Language Option can be found in the *Guide to National Board Certification.*

The *Guide to National Board Certification* is located at the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

Q: What if a candidate needs special accommodations for a disability?

A: It is the policy of NBPTS to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations governing both facilities and administration. If a candidate has a disability that necessitates an accommodation under the ADA for either the portfolio or assessment center portion of the National Board Certification process, the candidate may submit the *Nonstandard Testing Accommodation Form* that is included in the eligibility verification kit mailed to candidates. Candidates must adhere to request deadlines in order to allow time for proper processing and delivery of each nonstandard testing accommodation.

A printable copy of the *Nonstandard Testing Accommodation Form* is available at the *Candidate Resource Center* at *www.nbpts.org*

The *Nonstandard Testing Accommodation Form* is available by calling *1-800-22TEACH.*

"Nobody pursues National Board Certification and remains unchanged. You emerge a better teacher with a much better understanding of your profession."

– Al Bird

NBCT, Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science, Massachusetts

Q: **What** organizations support NBPTS?

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- American Business Conference
- Association for the Advancement of International Education
- Association of Colleges and Schools of Education in State Universities
- American Association of School Administrators
- American Educational Research Association
- American Federation of Teachers
- Association of Teacher Educators
- Chamber of Commerce of the United States
- The Conference Board
- Council for American Private Education
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Council of the Great City Schools
- Council of Growing Companies
- Council on Competitiveness
- International Reading Association
- International Society for Technology in Education
- Music Educators' National Conference
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Land Grant Colleges and Affiliated Private Universities
- National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials
- National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions
- National Association of Black School Educators
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
- National Council of La Raza
- National Council for the Social Studies
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Council of Teachers of English
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- National Commission on Teaching & America's Future
- National Education Association
- National Governors' Association
- National Middle School Association
- National School Boards Association
- Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives

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"I think the best way to help students learn is for teachers to continue their learning process. The best proof that this works is by the comments and feedback you get from your students, their parents, your colleagues and administrators. There's a different level of respect."

– Janenne Scott

NBCT, Middle Childhood/Generalist,
Illinois

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This project is funded in part with grants from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. Through September 2002, NBPTS has been appropriated federal funds of $119.3 million, representing approximately 45 percent of the National Board Certification project. More than $143.0 million (55 percent) of the project's cost will be financed by non-governmental sources.

The contents of this brochure were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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